

Congressman Felix J. Grucci, Jr.
Financial Services Committee
Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity
Hearing on HR 3995
April 10, 2002

Thank you Madame Chairwoman.

I would like to thank you for holding this hearing today. The Housing Affordability for America Act, which you introduced, is a great step towards providing more affordable housing to low and very low income Americans.

Among other things, this legislation accomplishes two very important goals. First, it makes needed corrections and changes to current housing programs that are either underused, in need of simplification or duplicative. Secondly, HR 3995 empowers local governments to control housing programs and initiatives, mainly by providing local governments with the flexibility they need to properly adapt housing programs to their communities.

With a greater need for affordable housing nation-wide, it is important to ensure that current housing programs are being used as efficiently as possible. To do this, we must ensure that local governments have the ability to administer these programs effectively. Providing flexibility will allow local governments to utilize housing programs in a way that best fits their community.

Prior to coming to Congress, I was a town supervisor on Long Island. In an area where affordable housing is extremely important, I know first-hand that barriers currently exist that prevent many families from either owning their own home or finding affordable rental opportunities. Local governments must also have the flexibility to make housing programs better serve their communities.

As an original cosponsor of this legislation, I believe that we are taking a great step towards providing the affordable housing America needs. Communities across the country rely on affordable housing, but are often hamstrung by the lack of flexibility of some of the programs. HR 3995 will not only better the system and the programs that support it, it will also provide more access to affordable housing to those that really need it.

As members of this committee, we must find ways to increase homeownership to all families and also provide affordable rental opportunities. I believe that this piece of legislation makes great strides in accomplishing both of these goals.

I would like to welcome the witnesses and look forward to working together in order to find reasonable solutions to the affordable housing problems Americans face today. I look forward to your testimony.

Thank you.